THE MISSES BRENTHAM.

BY P. A. BLYTH,

Author of "Paul Porter and his Brothers," "Broken Reeds," etc.

"A glance told him he might be intruding." p. 131.

CHAPTER IV.

A DEFINITE RESOLVE.

THAT evening Charles Stanley, in a moment of dreamy indolence, recalled the afternoon's meeting with Miss Brentham. He was sitting alone. Mr. and Mrs. Bowtell were both at that time much absorbed with anxieties of their own. Sickness had entered the household, selecting the younger members for its victims. What had seemed at first only bad colds, had turned to very serious illness, and Charles Stanley was aware that Alfy, the youngest, a child of two years old, was ill to an extent that caused his parents very grave anxiety. They were both at that moment occupied with him,

Charles Stanley was truly sorry with very genuine feeling for his friend's troubles, but he could be of no actual service, so there seemed no harm in letting his imagination amuse him for a time with one of her rose-coloured visions. Recalling the incidents, looks and words of that afternoon's meeting, a growing consciousness forced itself upon him—he stood in that enviable position which others of Miss Brentham's admirers had striven for in vain. At this point his thoughts grew very consoling. He set up one knee and nursed it affectionately, while the lines on his face visibly softened. Mrs. Bowtell had said he would be a proud man, and she should be proud of him, if he gained Miss Brentham's favour. This was another pleasing reflection. A smile broke over his lips, and his head began slowly moving in little affirmative nods, keeping time to the happy tenor of his thoughts.

Of course, as to his own feelings, he was not positively in love with Miss Brentham, but then her regard for him would greatly compensate for that little failure on his part; and he liked her—no one could know Miss Brentham and dislike her. She was very gentle and kind. How, if her husband were sick, she would nurse and comfort him; there was such protective kindness in her whole look and manner. She was very nice undoubtedly, and as to his circumstances—at this point Charles Stanley's face grew a shade rueful—those circumstances of his were in rather a sorry plight, but then his family was good, exceptionally good. It might look like marrying for money, but poor men had married rich women, and poor women had married rich men from time immemorial, and nothing worse, as a rule, was said of them than that they knew what they were about, and had done a good thing for themselves.

But as for marrying—who said a word about marrying! Charles Stanley looked abruptly round, as though he considered some one had personally suggested such a thing to him. Then, as he subsided once more into a labyrinth of happy imaginings—"What was that he was near saying to her that afternoon?" he asked himself. He was not quite sure that he meant to have said anything in particular, most probably he never should say that definite something which would decide his fate. Yet before retiring to rest that night, something almost like a resolve had shaped itself in his thoughts, and he was not at all sure in his own mind whether his next visit to Miss Brentham would be exactly a farewell one.

But while Charles Stanley was amusing himself with dreams, some of his more practical friends were taking definite measures on his behalf. The very next morning there arrived a letter from his eldest brother, telling him of a good opening in life that offered to him. It was just the thing for him, exactly suitable. Charles Stanley quite comprehended that part of it, but there was one troublesome condition to it all: a fair amount of capital was required. Charles Stanley's face visibly elongated. How could his careful, plodding, thoughtful elder brother be made to understand that money with him always melted away in some unaccountable fashion? It was his misfortune, but no-one ever appreciated how really unfortunate he was. Yet this project was all he could have desired. Could he close with this opportunity, he might yet make a successful career in life. But, capital!—the word sounded derisive to him—fair amount of capital! How could his brother imagine him to possess it? He had been on the look-out for something ever since his return to England, but meanwhile the little money he had possessed had dwindled away. It was the fact of thus having arrived at the end of his resources that had led him to think of making another trial of his fortunes abroad.

Sitting alone after breakfast, he conjured up a very hopeless state of affairs for himself indeed. There was nothing for him but to look his helpless fortunes in the face, and drift along somehow, as he had drifted hitherto. His brother demanded a speedy reply, so he would write at once and tell him that if a man with a fair amount of capital was required, as far as he himself went, he must relinquish all thought of the affair.

At this point, things assumed a very gloomy aspect—and then, even as he reflected upon the vision rising before him, suddenly, he could not tell from whence it came, a new, strange light seemed breaking slowly over the scene. The brightness did not originate with himself, he was too desponding for bright ideas of any kind; it seemed as though an unseen hand touched the gloomy picture with transforming power, the dark shades and gloomy outlines vanished, a soft, harmonious colouring pervaded all, and then—two eyes seemed looking straight into his, eyes not soul-thrilling or keenly-penetrating, but eyes startled out of their usual unvarying expression into that look of passionate appeal, of dumb entreaty, eyes as he had seen them when they last looked into his, full of their unspoken history. The whole tenor of his thoughts seemed turned, that revelation that had come to him the night before seemed again dawning forcibly on his mind. He rose hastily, as though to escape the new seductive sweetness that had entered into his thoughts. He walked across to the window and stood looking out. The prospect outside was not cheering, the sky was one unbroken mass of leaden cloud, and the wind went by with a hollow moan, prophetic of rain or storm.

The aspect of the outer world was not inviting, and Charles Stanley turned again to his position by the fire. Taking out his brother's letter for reperusal, a little postscript that had escaped notice now met his eye:

"It is high time you were doing something; don't stand in your own light; if you let this chance go by, you may never meet such another."

A curious expression stole over Charles Stanley's face as he read; slowly he refolded the letter and replaced it in his pocket. Half an hour went by, still he sat in that position by the fire, but the expression of his face had contracted, his eyes were fixed intently, yet seeing nothing of surrounding objects. At last he rose, and quietly went upstairs to his own room, where he closed and fastened the door carefully.

When he again quitted the room, a sealed letter was in his hand. He did not put that letter with the other household epistles; his own hands must post it. Quietly, as though he were doing some guilty thing, he went from the house. The post-office was about half-a-mile distant. He walked quickly in that direction, and dropped his letter himself into the letter-box. The deed was done. Whether or not he was in the enviable position he fancied he was, Miss Brentham's reply to that letter would speedily decide. Then he tried to feel quite as usual, and walk home again with head erect, but a strange sense of consciousness was upon him, and, of course it was a foolish idea, but he could almost have fancied he had lost an inch or two of his ordinary height. But, as he told himself, the deed was done, whether for happy result or not, time would show.

The next day passed as usual, but the following morning Mr. Bowtell passed to Charles Stanley a letter in a lady's handwriting. Charles Stanley at once consigned the letter to his pocket; but he need not have made any attempt

towards secrecy, Mr. Bowtell being far too absorbed with his family troubles to give even a passing notice to his friend's correspondence. Little Alfy lay in imminent peril—how imminent the danger was Mr. Bowtell himself alone fully knew; in his tender love for his wife, he could not bring himself to tell even her how little hope he had of the child's life. This trouble and his professional duties so engrossed his thoughts, that had all the female community of the parish conspired to write to Charles Stanley, he would probably have given him the letters without a word or scarcely a passing reflection. But Charles Stanley, in his self-consciousness, chose to read his letter, which certainly for him was a momentous one, alone and unobserved. Slowly he opened it, and fortune was surely very kind to him at last—it was an affirmative answer. It was written certainly in a somewhat restrained tone, with a terseness not unlike old Mrs. Brentham—perhaps she had some hand in it—and there was some allusion about friends to be consulted that he hardly understood; he had thought Miss Brentham had no nearer friends than old Mrs. Brentham—but whom she might choose to consult was a very minor point—the answer was undoubtedly affirmative, and if the letter itself was a little too guarded in expression, there was a blissfully unbiased little postscript, which would have made any true lover's heart leap for joy; it said, "I think now I understand love at first sight."

Then all along he had not been deceived But still he did not manifest any great exuberance of joy; the only exultant thing he did was to write to his brother, telling him if that little matter could be kept open for a while he might avail himself of it; the letter concluded by mentioning, quite in accidental fashion, that he was on the eve of a brilliant matrimonial alliance.

There was no one to whom to confide his secret had he wished. He could not have intruded upon the Bowtells in their trouble—besides, he had always preserved a guarded reticence with them concerning the Brenthams, and of late their thoughts had been so occupied, that his visits, had they been much more frequent, would have passed unobserved.

His intention was good to visit the Brenthams during the day, but the morning was taken up with his letter, and in the afternoon Mr. Bowtell had a little commission, which as a favour he asked him to undertake for him. This occupied more time, so he finally decided to get to the Brenthams about half an hour before their dinner-hour. This would allow an interview first with Miss Brentham, and a social evening spent in her presence would be the best way of cementing the new bond between them. He was ready to set out, but he could not well depart without a little explaining his absence to Mr. and Mrs. Bowtell. Inquiring for them he learned they were both in the drawing-room. Thither he went. He had opened the door and taken a step into the room, when a glance further told him he might be intruding. On the hearth-rug stood Mr. and Mrs. Bowtell. Mr. Bowtell's arms were round his wife, her face was hidden on his shoulder, she was evidently weeping. Charles Stanley's first instinct was to withdraw, but raising her head Mrs. Bowtell saw him. Seeing he was about to retreat, she smiled at him brightly through her tears.

"Oh, don't go, Mr. Stanley," she said.

"I fear I am intruding."

"Oh no, you are not intruding at all, do not go away."

Then as, reassured by the words, and above all by the smile, Charles Stanley advanced nearer, she said,

"You must excuse us, Mr. Stanley, but we are old married people, and have our little joys and sorrows, and our dear Alfy has been so dreadfully ill. George has just been telling me how little hope he had of him, but, thank God, our darling child is restored to us; about an hour ago a change took place, and now he is in a beautiful sleep. George says when he awakes he will be very weak, but he will seem almost like himself again—and oh, Mr. Stanley, if—if it had been the other way!"

And again her head was hidden on her husband's shoulder. A moment after she looked up, a smile again struggling through her tears.

"Mr. Stanley, I am afraid you will only think us foolish, but perhaps some time you will understand these things for yourself."

Then glancing up into her husband's face,

"His turn will come one day, George, won't it?"

Mr. Bowtell stooped and kissed his wife. Charles Stanley noticed his eyes too were moist with unshed tears. Then husband and wife separated, and Mr. Bowtell turning round observed his cousin's smartened appearance.

"You are quite dressed up, Charles; are you going out?"

"Yes. I am just going across to the Brenthams."

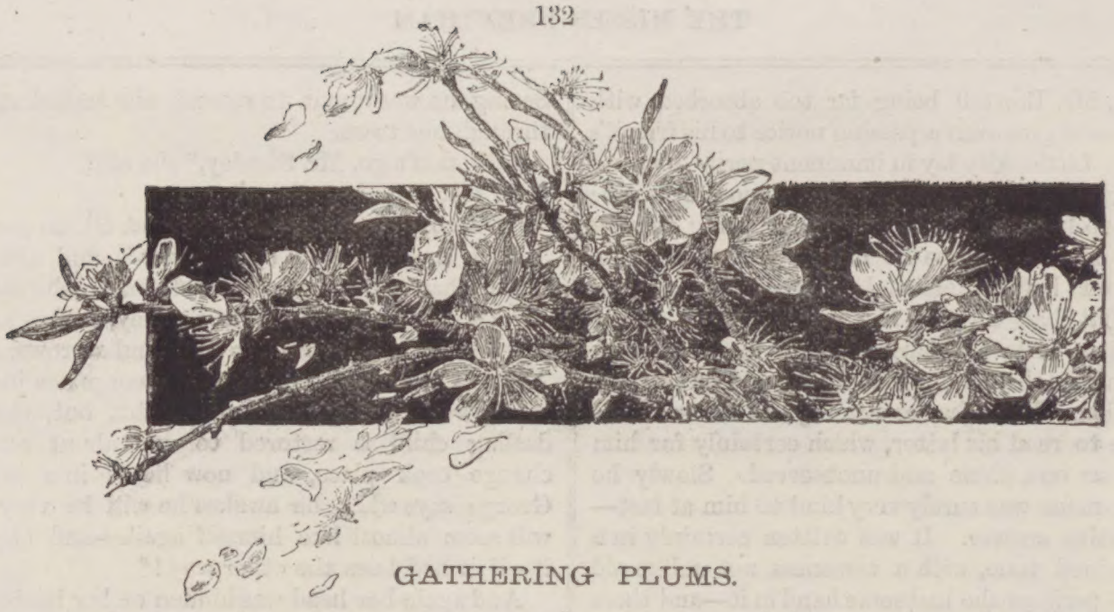
"Going to dinner?"

"Most probably I shall stop; that is what I was coming in to tell you, so that you should not yourselves wait for me."

He then bade them good-bye at once. It was not the season for further remark, but as Mrs. Bowtell returned his good-bye, there was some meaning in her smile as she added, "I wish you a very pleasant evening, Mr. Stanley."

Charles Stanley chose a short cut across the fields leading to the Brenthams' house. As he went along, the little domestic scene he had just witnessed rose vividly before his mind. Mrs. Bowtell had said his turn would come one day; it might, but he could hardly fancy himself and Mary Brentham enacting a scene like the one he had just witnessed. If there were children who had to be wept or rejoiced over, she would probably do the weeping or rejoicing alone in the nursery, while he was engaged in some pursuit more befitting his sex. But Mr. and Mrs. Bowtell were exceptional people, quite a lover-like couple; all married people could not be so. At that moment a tall briar hung straight across his path. Lifting his cane, with one stroke he cut it down, emblematic perhaps of the way in which he meant to cut down all unpleasant ideas that might obtrude themselves. Without indulging in any further reflections, he walked on briskly towards the Brenthams' house. A few minutes later he had rung the bell and been admitted into Mrs. Brentham's drawing-room.

(*Continued on page* 160.)



GATHERING PLUMS.

BEAUTIFUL September!
Well do I remember,
In the days not long ago which almost seemed divine,
A golden breezy morning,
First autumn's rich adorning,
When the loveliness around me stirred my heart like wine.

The sheaves of corn stood drooping,
And the reapers gathered stooping,
Then loaded high the waggons with the golden-bearded grain;
And while I thought of beauty,
My love spake but of duty,
"Dearest heart, it will be autumn ere we two shall meet again."

By the hedgerows ruddy
(Veinèd leaves a study),
To an orchard where the fruit hung mellowing on the trees;
My love he touched it lightly,
And whispered to me brightly,
"Next year will I be with thee. to gather some of these."

And then were farewells spoken,
But nothing did betoken
That twice old autumn would enfold with burning hand each leaf;
And I who lived for beauty,
Learned how to live for duty,
And sometimes in the shadows kissed the pale, sad angel grief.

Cometh now September!
(Season to remember),
Touching all the fruit with bloom like fine condensèd dew,
Wild thyme sweetly scented,
Butterflies demented,
And my heart is singing, singing, O my love, for you!

To the orchard daily,
Forth I hie me gaily,
Knowing thou wilt meet me soon beneath the old fruit tree,
Heart to heart united,
Lover's troth re-plighted,
Thou wilt whisper in the silence, "Sweet, I love but thee."

JANE E. LIVOCK.

MISTRESS AND SERVANT.

WHAT is wrong? and what is the cause of the wrong? The "Great Servant Question," as it is called, has been brought prominently forward, opinions have been given, and suggestions made, and with what result? The "wrong" in the kitchen is acknowledged, but it is not cured.

What is wanted is a feeling of sympathy between mistress and maid. We owe something more than wages to the servants upon whom we depend for the comfort of the house. A few encouraging words by the way, a little help given occasionally, will bring about in the servant a feeling of respect for her mistress. "The craving for sympathy is the common boundary line between joy and sorrow."

The foolish ideas which servants sometimes have concerning the difference in social positions must be explained away by the superior example of those with whom they live.

"There is nothing so powerful as example; we put others straight by walking straight ourselves."

Instead of looking upon servants as beings of a different order, and treating them accordingly, we should try to elevate their minds and bring out their better natures, and lead them to love better things. We must not forget that a servant, although inferior to her mistress in worldly condition, may be superior to her in character.

A good mistress makes a good servant.

When a servant loses heart through too much fault-finding and too little praise and appreciation of her work, there will be no ready obedience to the will of her mistress. Unreasonable demands of service, too much restriction, the use of stern tones instead of quiet and soft ones, will soon destroy a servant's respect for her mistress. The respective duties of mistress and servant are justice and obedience; but often the obedience is expected from the servant without the corresponding justice being given by the mistress. "An ounce of justice is sometimes worth a ton of charity."

A mistress needs firmness, patience, prudence, benevolence and self-possession; firmness, in requiring obedience, strict and prompt; patience, to point out and mend faults and failures; prudence, in making rules and restrictions and in giving commands; benevolence, to sympathise with the troubles and cares of her servants, and to interest herself in their improvement; and self-possession, that she may never appear to disadvantage before her servants. "He who would command others, must first command himself."

"And my heart is singing, singing." p. 132.

"He suffers himself to be seen through a microscope, who allows himself to be caught in a fit of passion."

Familiarity and severity are to be avoided. A mistress can be kind without being familiar, and just without being severe.

Servants should be trusted entirely, until they prove themselves unworthy of the trust; the fact that their honour is respected, is often the very thing that helps them to sustain it amid temptations.

Punctuality, method, order and economy must be strictly adhered to, that there may be time for both work and recreation.

It is the duty of every mistress to see that her servants have a little spare time, to be spent in some profitable way, as reading, sewing, etc.

The precepts given in the Epistle to the Colossians, chapter iii., verses 18 to 25, if put into practice, will promote domestic happiness and family Christianity. The Scriptural injunction, "Ye also have a Master in heaven," should be not only a stimulus but a pattern.

THE ART OF NURSING.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE,

Author of "Semi-detached," etc., etc.

V.—Baths and Local Remedies.

When the doctor orders a bath for the patient, he should always be asked exactly what kind he wants given—whether it is to be hot, warm, tepid or cold.

Use the bath thermometer for testing the bath, and keep it up to the same temperature while the patient is in it.

The following are the degrees Fahr. of temperature:—

Hot bath	from	98°	to 105°	Fahr.
Warm bath	„	92°	to 98°	„
Tepid bath	„	85°	to 92°	„
Cold bath	„	56°	to 65°	„

Now for the time the patient should be allowed to remain in the bath:—

Hot bath	10 to 15	minutes.
Warm bath	14 to 20	„
Tepid bath	14 to 20	„
Cold bath	5 to 6	„

In the details of testing the water with the thermometer, and looking at your watch to see that the exact time is spent in it that the doctor desired, you cannot be too exact.

People should never bathe directly after a meal, and you should not let the patient be in a bath without some one within easy reach. Leave a bell by him that can be sounded if he needs assistance. If there is the smallest sign of faintness or exhaustion, you should get the patient out of the bath at once, and inform the doctor of it next time he comes. Before the patient is given his bath, you should have everything quite ready, the bath filled at the right temperature, and the clean linen and towels well aired and ready at hand. Have plenty of towels, and see that they are warm, and a warm dressing-gown and slippers to go to and from the bath in. Avoid all risk of chill. Whether a cold bath agrees with a person or not can be easily gauged by the feelings experienced after it. If the person feels comfortable and warm after it, the cold bath agrees with him; but if he is cold and chilly, that is a sure sign that cold bathing does not suit him.

Friction with a coarse towel after all baths is good, as it promotes the free action of the skin and assists the circulation.

In the case of children suffering from an eruptive fever, a hot bath is often employed to bring out the rash more fully, and sometimes it is very soothing to the child and induces sleep.

A foot or hip-bath should always be hot, and may be used for fifteen minutes. If a hot foot-bath is taken to relieve a cold in the head, hot water should be poured in continually, and a tablespoonful of mustard may be added with great advantage.

Soda baths are often recommended in cases of rheumatism. For this you need add one pound of carbonate of soda (washing soda) to the bath, which usually contains about thirty gallons of water. Dissolve the soda first of all in warm water

If a vapour bath is ordered, it may be given as follows: Let the patient, after he is quite undressed, put on a thin flannel night-gown, or else be enveloped in two large blankets reaching from neck to floor, so as to exclude the air.

Let him seat himself on a cane-bottomed chair, and place a bucket two-thirds full of boiling water under the chair. To keep the water hot, have heated bricks ready to put into it when it has had time to cool at all. After a short time the patient will begin to perspire, and after rubbing him quite dry with warm, rough towels, get him back into bed, placing him between blankets and hot sheets. A plan advised by Sir James Simpson for any one unable to get out of bed I give here.

"For it you only want a few soda-water bottles filled with hot water and tightly corked down, and these are wrapped round with pieces of flannel, or worsted stockings, wrung out in hot water. They are then placed round the patient in bed, and he is well covered up. In about half-an-hour you will find a thoroughly free perspiration. The bottles can now be taken away, and the patient wrapped up in a flannel blanket for another half-hour. If the bed during this process has got at all wet, you must remove him to another bed, which has, of course, been thoroughly well aired and warmed. In case no soda-water bottles are at hand, hot bricks will answer very well."

Poultices.—These are used to relieve pain, or, in case of wounds, to facilitate the separation of sloughs. They are generally made of linseed-meal, but may be made of oatmeal, starch, bread, etc. A linseed or an oatmeal poultice retains heat and moisture the longest time.

Before setting to work to make a poultice have everything you require for the purpose ready—basin, linen, spatula, etc.

After having heated the basin by rinsing it with boiling water, pour sufficient boiling water for the size of the poultice into it, and quickly sprinkle in the linseed-meal. Then spread the poultice on linen, tow, or paper, using for this purpose a spatula that you dip into hot water. Turn the margins of the linen or tow over the poultice, and apply it without anything between its surface and the skin. If the poultice is well made it will come off quite cleanly from the skin when you remove it. While the poultice is on the patient cover it with a piece of oiled silk. If the poultice is intended to remain on for a long time undisturbed, you can, in making it, add a little simple ointment or olive oil, mixing it in well. A poultice should be spread about an inch thick, but if a lighter one is required lay cotton wool over it, as that serves to keep in the heat. To boil a linseed poultice on the fire is quite wrong, and I hope it is needless to say—though, indeed, I have known such a thing done—never use a poultice a second time. Let it be burnt when taken off.

You must remember that, unless the poultice is very hot, it is practically useless; but, on the other hand, you must be careful not to scald the patient. If you are applying a poultice to a paralysed person or any one who is unconscious, you must be very careful, and always remember that the skin of children is much thinner than that of adults, and consequently very much more sensitive.

A linseed poultice can be kept on three hours, and care should be taken not to leave a poultice on when it has become cold. When you take off one poultice, do not do so until you have the second quite ready to put on, or if another is not to be applied, have some cotton wool ready to lay where it has been, and so preclude all chance of chill.

A mustard poultice is always used as a counter-irritant,

and being quick in its action it is apt to cause more severe pain than a fly blister. A mustard poultice should be made with cold or tepid water; never with hot water. Do not add vinegar, as some people do, as that only weakens the mustard. Having made it into a paste, spread it on a piece of brown paper or linen the required size, and lay a piece of muslin over the surface to be applied to the skin. A mustard poultice can be kept on for fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five minutes. No rule can be laid down, as the skin of some people is so much more sensitive to the action of the mustard than that of others. When you have removed the poultice, sponge the skin gently over with tepid water, and place a layer of cotton wool upon it.

If you wish to lessen the pungency of the mustard you can add a little common flour to it when mixing it.

Mustard leaves are very useful things to have in the house, and can be applied after being moistened with tepid water.

In using a *liniment*, rub the surface upon which you are going to apply it for a few moments, and then pour a few drops of the liquid into the palm of your hand and rub it on with an even, firm pressure, until all the moisture has been absorbed.

Fomentations are often used to relieve pain, lessen inflammation, etc. Dr. Anderson's method is as follows:—"You require boiling water, flannel (preferably coarse flannel), and waterproof or mackintosh. Oiled silk does not make a good substitute for the last. You prepare a fomentation in the following way: Spread out a towel in an empty basin, and on that lay the flannel folded eight times or so, and to the size you wish it. Then pour boiling water upon it and wring it in the towel as dry as you possibly can. Keep it in the towel till you are ready to apply it to the patient, and just before doing so shake it gently for a second or two to allow the admission of a little air between the folds of the flannel. Having applied it, place a piece of mackintosh over it, of such a size that the latter will completely overlap the flannel by at least an inch on all sides. See that the whole is kept closely in position by means of a bandage or such like. If you are careful to follow these instructions, a fomentation will continue hot many hours; but if, for example, the mackintosh should not completely overlap the flannel, should even a corner of the latter be exposed, evaporation will take place at that point, and the fomentation will become cold, clammy, and worse than useless. If properly applied, however, it will continue hot, as I have said, for many hours; but in most cases you will be directed to change it every hour or so.

"Never omit to shake the fomentation in the way I have mentioned, so as to separate the folds of the flannel somewhat. It is a point seldom referred to and far too little known. The fomentation will not be materially cooled by so doing, while, by being made less compact or solid, or, in other words, by having a freer admixture of air, which is a bad conductor of heat, the heat will be retained by the fomentation for a much longer time."

Ice is often applied when a great degree of cold is desired A bladder or sponge-bag is necessary to contain the ice. Ice can easily be broken by applying a coarse needle to it, and then hammering it or pressing it down with a thimble. Always place a towel close to the application of ice, in case of any leakage. It will continue cold until the last piece of ice is melted, but not longer, and should then be renewed.

When cold is required of a less degree, a fold of linen dipped in water or vinegar, or in spirits and water, and placed on the brow is a far more efficacious method than the common one, so often used, of a soaked handkerchief. The latter soon gets warm, and requires much more frequent changing. Do not, however, let the linen become dry.

Leeches should be kept out of water half an hour before applying them, and the skin to which you place them should have been well washed and rubbed dry. Smear a little sweet milk on the part, as that will make them bite, and in placing them on the patient remember that the mouth of the leech is in the tapering end of its body. Do not pull leeches about with a warm hand, but, placing them in a glass, turn them over the place where they are intended to bite. When the leeches have done their work they soon drop off, and they should not be pulled off. Bathe the bitten part with warm water, and if more blood is necessary to be taken apply a hot poultice. The bleeding can be stopped by pressure with the finger or a small compress; but if these methods fail send for the doctor. If required to use a second time, sprinkle some salt over the leeches, and, after washing them a few times in cold water, put them in a vessel half-full of water, and cover it with a piece of perforated cardboard.

KITH AND KIN.

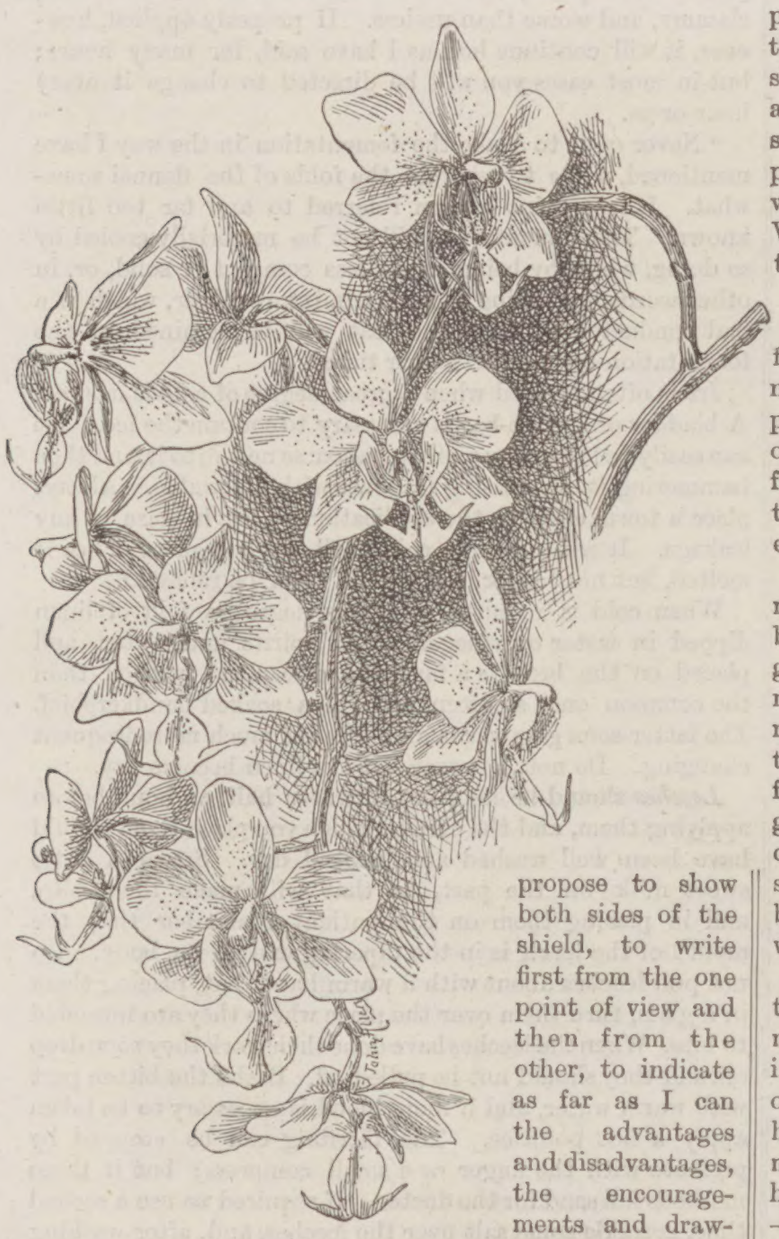
THE OUTER CIRCLE.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

1. The Step-mother.

There are relationships so near and dear that they are part of our very selves, and we speak of the feelings which they draw out as "natural affections"; we regard them as in a manner instincts, as, indeed, in the case of young children such emotions certainly are. We would not presume to tell a good, nay, even a bad, mother to love her daughter, or a daughter to love her mother. We would hardly think of warning one or both to guard carefully against the influences which might warp or extinguish their mutual regard. For God has planted deep in each heart the gracious, sacred tenderness which survives the utmost strain and the hardest conditions, and is often the last chord struck in a man or a woman's breast. The type of grief is Rachel weeping for her children. The nearest thing to an impossibility is said to be a mother's forgetting her child.

I am not dealing with such relations, but with other connections more distant, some of them more arbitrary, none of them proverbial as symbols of loving-kindness, yet nearly all of them occurring in most lives, and all of them, I believe, capable of faithful cultivation and of becoming in ordinary cases sources of peace and happiness, as they are too often sources of strife and wretchedness. It is this conception of relationships which are not altogether natural and instinctive, which may be largely made or marred by good or bad treatment, in which unquestionably cultivation is possible and desirable that is in my mind while I write these papers. I



propose to show both sides of the shield, to write first from the one point of view and then from the other, to indicate as far as I can the advantages and disadvantages, the encouragements and drawbacks, aids and obstacles to happiness in each position.

I should like to start by saying of the step-mother that I believe the prejudice which attaches to the tie is largely due to a fond exaggeration of the claims of a true mother and the benefits conferred by her. It took its rise in the rude ages of history and literature, when primitive passions were not only strong to fierceness, but were regarded by those who were their chroniclers as the sole forces in the moral world which deserved to be expressed. Thus in legends and ballads we come continually on the figure of the cruel step-mother, who is generally impelled by burning jealousy to accomplish every variety of heartless wickedness and crime in the supposed interests of her own children. All this is changed—not merely by the Christian civilization which would render such open and gross outrages beyond the power of almost any woman, it is also forbidden by the greater moderation and fairness in love and hate of disciplined human beings. But the old shadow yet hovers over the frequently necessary and often beneficent relationship in lingering prejudice still too potent with the foolish and ignorant, in the use of such phrases as when we liken nature in her most ungenial moods to "a hard step-mother," or when we grow condescending and admit grudgingly that even an indifferent step-mother is better than no mother.

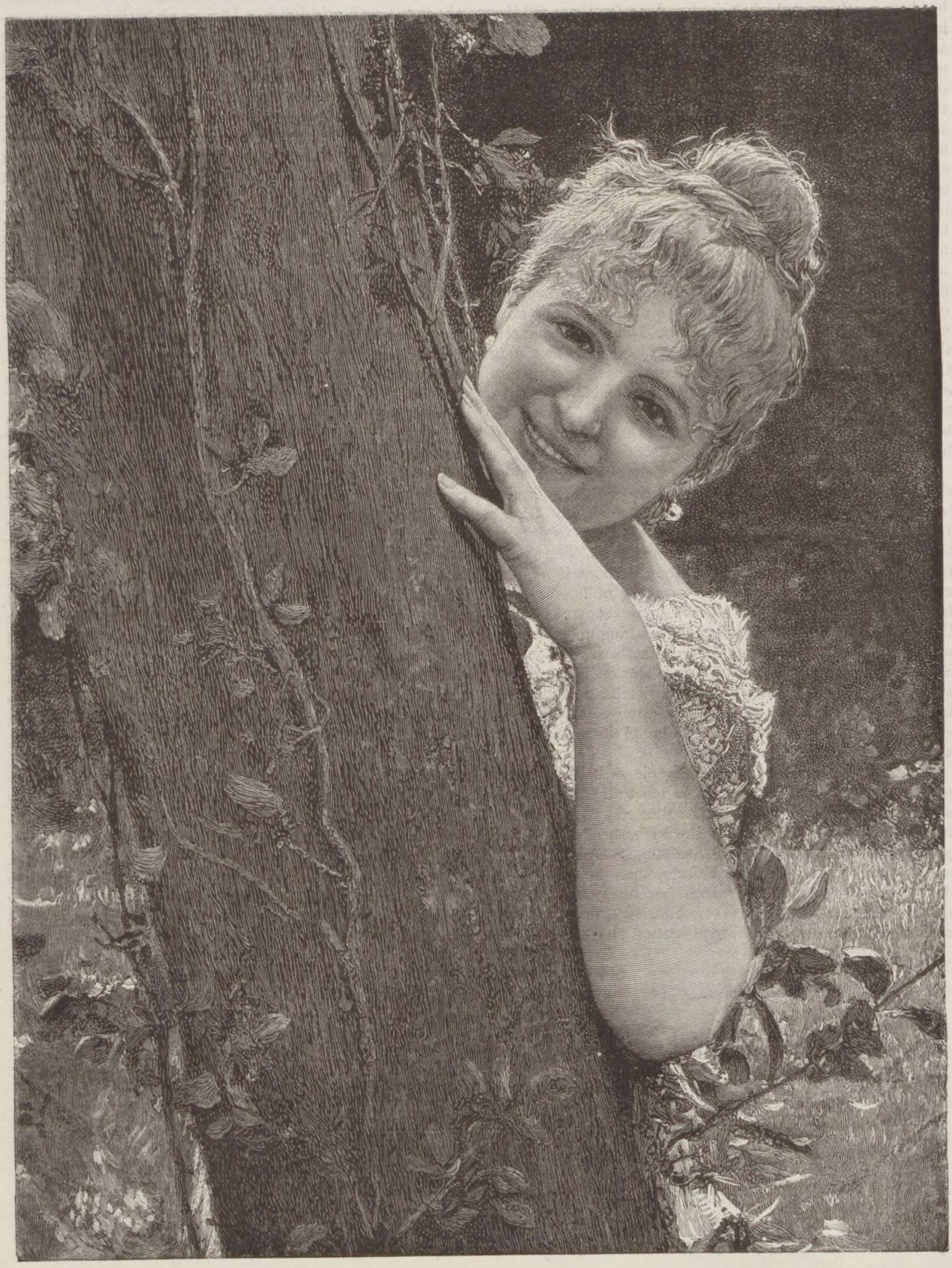
I shall begin by saying that I believe (and within my own personal knowledge I have seen the belief often exemplified) that a large proportion of step-mothers start on the relationship with an honest desire to "mother" their adopted charge, as fully and kindly as if the children were their own. A smaller number, perhaps, but still a distinct fraction, are positively attracted to the office by that mother-hunger which is more or less latent in every good woman's heart. What to the more worldly-minded and harder natures in the world without is a serious drawback to the match, namely, another woman's children to be a perpetual responsibility, is to the more unsophisticated, more confiding, gentler-tempered bride, one of the chief gains in the new life on which she is entering. "I will be so good to the poor, dear little children. They will be such a never-ending occupation and interest for me. I will love them for their father's sake and their own, and I am sure I shall make them love me in return. What a shame to suppose we shall ever be in each other's way!"

One of the blithest, warmest-hearted sets of verses I ever read was in the shape of a grateful acknowledgment made by a bright, happy bride to her bridegroom, for the goodly gift he was about to bestow upon her in the persons of his motherless children. How was she to repay, or even to reckon up the value of such an unapproachable present—the gallant lads, who were to grow up strong men like their father, and after him to be her right-hand men; the fine girls, who were to stand one on each side of her; the rosy child that was to sit on her knee? Alas! the generous singer died a year afterwards on the birth of her own child; but surely her adopted children never forgot the eager, glad welcome which had been addressed to them.

I have observed already that I have seen such anticipations crowned with the utmost success. I have seen step-mothers and step-daughters who were as dear to each other as if they had been real mothers and daughters. I have heard of a little girl who guilelessly confided to her step-mother how glad she was that her papa had given her (the step-mother) to the child for a mamma, since what should she have done if he had given her Aunt Mary for a mamma?—the said Aunt Mary being less lenient to the shortcomings of the small maiden. I have known a step-daughter mourn for her most unselfish, most affectionate step-mother with a depth of heartfelt sorrow which could hardly have been exceeded had the loss been that of a real mother.

Now for the causes which we must own result in a not very uncommon experience of disappointment, when the relationship begun in perfect good faith, loyalty, and the sweetness of a womanly heart, ends in mortifying and distressing failure. In the first place, a young or middle-aged step-mother must not under-rate the difficulty of the position. The greater honour to her if she conquer it; but it will not promote her chance of conquest to ignore the difficulty. In some respects the position jars on natural feeling in all it asks in what may be roughly styled an artificial connection, the deference, confidence and affection, which, when we take into consideration the faults and frailties of humanity, are not always granted without an effort, even where we have to do with the original, very human tie.

To children who can remember their own mother, and are justly attached to her memory, the introduction of even the best intentioned of step-mothers to fill the vacant place is apt to be a trying process to all concerned. The contradictory impulses, the sense of something very like antipathy which is produced by old warring associations, the embarrassment and constraint, can only be overcome by great pains and much patience. It is sometimes said in reference



Hide and Seek.

to an "own mother" that her children never know what she has been to them, and what she has done for them, till they have children of their own to draw forth their tenderness and tax their energies; and that she must wait till that—it may be distant day, or day never seen on earth—before she can receive from her sons and daughters the entire comprehension, the unreserved, overflowing affection and gratitude which are hers by right. It may be said with a thousand times more reason in reference to even the best and most considerate of step-mothers. Her love, like divine charity, must suffer long and be kind, must not seek its own, must not be easily provoked, must think no evil, must bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things. She must never cease to remember that she is not, whatever she may be, the real mother, with the real mother's claims and privileges. She cannot help it, she may have done everything in her power to make up for it, she may actually have done more than the real mother could or would have done; but still the negation is there. The innocent pride and satisfaction in the veritable mother, the boundless trust in her, the desperate clinging to her which is born with the child, cannot be transferred to another mother in its entirety. It is gone beyond recall; a partial substitute for it can only be earned by long years of unstinted duty and devotion.

A wise woman will be more than content if her step-children—especially if they are beyond the age of children—begin by recognising in her a friend, a constant, kind friend. If this be so, and she and they are true to the beginning, they will end by being much more than friends. She should not ask too much, and that too soon. There is a great gulf between her step-daughters' speaking of her as their father's wife, or even their father's housekeeper, as "Mrs. C——" or "Mrs. S——," and their lavishing upon her pet names, spontaneous caresses and unslumbering attention. Sincere friendship is a good mid-way station between the two extremes, and to start with it, until the new relations know each other better, is a very promising commencement—a kind of "love-me-little, love-me-long" introduction to a much closer alliance.

The great motive power of unhappiness between step-mother and step-children seems to me to be the principal agent in a large proportion of the discord and disunion in families however related. It is the hydra-headed monster jealousy in some shape. In this instance, looking at it as it affects the step-mother, the elder woman is apt to feel distrustful of the influence which her husband's children naturally and lawfully exercise over him, since, may be, it is in conflict with her own. The small contention may be only in trifles, still she allows herself to be vexed by it. Even when she is too well principled and too good, with too great a regard for her husband to head a faction and divide the family in essentials, she feels it almost more mortifying to be worsted in trifles than in great matters, to have her opinion on some minor domestic concern, of which as the new-comer she may know but little after all, set aside, and the judgment of one or all of the juniors preferred to hers. I can only say that if she is large-hearted and large-minded she will not set store on petty vindications of her supremacy. She will know that she is the senior, the representative of one of the parents. While she will maintain her rule in what is of moment, she will be pleased to set an example of giving way in what is of no consequence. She desires no triumph, yet the true and lasting triumph is hers. She has a gentle satisfaction in feeling that here indeed in effacing herself she is availing herself of a mother's prerogative. In her unassuming good nature she is tempted to wonder at the gratitude which is won by a tiny piece of self-denial that, in her mind, is not worth a grown woman's mentioning.

I imagine the commonest and least easily escaped from source of jealousy is where the step-mother has children of her own, and they are brought into competition with her step-children and their rights as the first-born. Yet, rightly viewed, the younger children should only be another link in the family chain which binds the members together. For by these children a natural blood relationship is introduced into the connection. The children so dear to the mother as bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, belong also to the father, and through him are half-brothers and sisters to the elder children. These may not immediately realise the fact, or be alive to the hereditary traits and tendencies which mark the blood-relationship; but the truth will gradually dawn upon them that the small strangers are of one family with themselves, and they will be forced to admit that there is at last an incontestable tie between them and their step-mother. To have the benefit of the tie, and all the enlarged and extended affections which it implies, she must be upright to the heart's core in every dealing which concerns both her own and her husband's children. If she is sensible as well as tender, with a sensitive heart for the feelings of the big or the small children, to whom she is all the mother they can thenceforth know, she will avoid all excessive demonstrations of that preference for her own children, which, within proper limits, is simply natural and inevitable. It need not be all-engrossing and overwhelming.

CHASTENING OR REVENGE?

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL,

Author of "An Auntie's Notions about Children," etc., etc.

I SUPPOSE there scarcely exists the wide world over a mother so tender or so negligent that she does not, at one time or another, punish her child. It may be by means of the reluctant, forewarned deprivation of some anticipated treat, or widely different! by the hasty blow of irritated temper. But all children do wrong, more or less, and all parents, except perhaps the very smallest minority, inflict penalties in consequence. The motive and spirit of such correction is a subject of vital importance no less to the parent than to the child, so it can scarcely be superfluous to offer a few remarks thereupon.

It has been well said, "You should never punish a child while you are angry." The need for such an exhortation is proved by the half-astonished air with which many persons will reply in effect, "Why, if I did not punish while I was angry, I should not punish at all!" What does this reveal, but that such chastisement is not true *chastening*, or purifying, but mere *revenge?* It sounds very ugly to speak of any grown person as being revenged upon a little creature not one-quarter her years or size, with perhaps not one-tenth her knowledge and experience; but if any mother will honestly recall and examine the feelings with which she administered the latest whipping to her six-year-old, or impatient shake to her twenty-months baby, she will probably find that the truly corrective, the loving, yearning, teaching spirit which should predominate in all punishment was almost swallowed up in an unacknowledged feeling of retaliation. Of course, no one who reads this magazine would openly admit such a thing, but there it must be, or why should the moment's exasperation decide whether or not the whipping or shake shall be given? And mothers of the less restrained classes frankly avow their sentiments in such commonly-heard phrases as "I'll *pay* you when I get hold of you!" "Let me catch you doing that; I'll make you sorry for it—I'll make you smart!" Sorry, that is, for the pain of the punishment, not for the wrong done; this seems never to enter some people's minds. Granted that if the mother did not punish when angry she would not punish at all, then better not.

But children cannot be allowed to go on wholly unchecked, or in course of time they would make their own, and other people's lives unbearable, and mere verbal remonstrance, couched in gentle terms, is frequently insufficient. Occasional castigation is a necessity to all. But it should be castigation indeed, and its sole end the betterment of the offender. How words become distorted in our imagination! how coloured, or rather discoloured, by ages of improper use! The verb to *castigate*, which now has come to mean little else in our ears than to whip or beat, is actually a derivation of the Latin *castus*—pure. A real bodily castigation, therefore, is not a flogging, but a bath! a making clean, a purifying. A moral castigation, even if necessarily inflicted through the medium of the senses, should be spiritual cleansing. That is the Divine, the only worthy idea. I do not think it exaggeration to say that more than half the punishments children receive do them positively more harm than good, simply because this essential principle is forgotten. Revenge in any form is terribly hardening, both to the inflictor and the victim. As a mere deterrent it may succeed. There is little doubt of that. But what loving mother would be satisfied to merely hold her child back from wrong-doing by fear of pain or loss, while its heart remained in estranged revolt?

No chastisement is so impressive as that which is akin to the wrong done. To whip or condemn to "durance vile" for any and every offence is a clumsy, uncivilised method of managing; and parents, who, unlike school teachers, have almost unbounded control over the events of their children's lives, should surely be able to find in most cases some less arbitrary and more effectual plan. For unpunctuality, the loss of some promised pleasure dependent thereon; for quarrelsomeness, temporary separation from those quarrelled with; for greed or unfairness, restitution, with "damages," to the one wronged; for sins of the tongue, a season of enforced silence; for disobedience—the fore-front of most juvenile offending—simply its own consequences, an infliction which could surely be sometimes permitted without inconvenience to any but the one in fault, and not more so than should be proportionate and wholesome even for him.

I knew a lady who, in one instance at least, chastised in a perfect fashion, and with perfect results, though the child corrected was under twelve months old. The baby had all a baby's inexperienced love for bright, *hot* things—the fire, the shining teapot, the lamp. "Burny, burny!" and "Baby mustn't!" were not enough, so baby was allowed to touch the hot teapot with the tips of those adventuresome, rebellious little fingers; and it was sufficient. What baby thought about it, I cannot say, but never, as she grew older, was she known to attempt that fatal play with fire or light which has cost so many a precious little life. More; she became one of the most obedient of children, with the intelligent, willing obedience born of perfect confidence in the reason and rightness of the maternal laws.

With children who are of any age to understand, "moral suasion," explanation, a clear and patient setting forth of the wrongness of the naughty deed should surely first be tried, and failing that, to allow the evil which is persisted in to bear its natural fruit must be the most proper and efficacious penalty; only when such methods are impracticable should arbitrary inflictions be resorted to, and never without unmistakably showing that an unmixed desire to cure the erring tendency, and *not*, in the slightest degree, a spirit of retaliation for the annoyance caused by it, is your only motive.

That taint of vindictiveness which seems to have entered more or less into all human punishment since the earliest times has undoubtedly built up one of the greatest of existing barriers between the soul of man and his Maker. We finite beings have for generations upon generations avenged ourselves with bitterness in our hearts, calling it retribution, correction, or punishment, hating, if only for a brief, blind moment, the creature that called it forth, until, as a race, we have rendered ourselves almost incapable of appreciating or benefiting by the loving chastisement of God. We think of Him as with frowning brow taking vengeance on our sins; we believe in troubles sent in wrath; in afflictions which are mere penalties, having no natural connection either with our transgressions or our character, and we grow hopeless or hard. Even as our refusal to pardon the trespasses of others renders it morally impossible for us to receive the forgiveness of God—for this is a normal consequence, there is nothing despotic in the Divine retribution—so our habitual union of punishment with the idea of retaliation, revenge, and dis-love has almost totally deprived us of the capacity

for rightly responding to His holy rebukes. Could we but regard chastisement as being inevitable as a crop of nettles from nettle seed, as beneficial in intent as the nauseous fever draught or the surgeon's knife, we should surely, with willing, docile, ay, and grateful hearts, set ourselves to discover and eradicate the evil cause. We should read Solomon's injunction: "Chasten thy son while there is hope," in the heavenly radiance of "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;" we should punish Divinely, sympathetically, and we should ourselves repent like good children; and the next generation would be eternally the better for it in every way.

A BITTER LESSON.

BY EDITH C. KENYON,

Author of "Hilda; or, Life's Discipline," etc.

"You are very unkind, Griffith. I don't often ask for anything, but when I do I hate to be denied."

"Indeed, Mary, I do not want to deny you anything; but money is scarce just now, and——"

"Oh! I know," she cried, interrupting him passionately, "it is always so when *I* want anything for myself, or the children."

"Mary! Mary!" the poor man's tone was full of grief. He leaned against the doorpost, as if for support; and if his wife had looked at him she would have noticed that his face was strangely pale, and that there was a grave, set look about his mouth as of one in pain.

But Mary did not even give him a glance. She was a pretty, but self-willed young woman, who had been a milliner's assistant before she married Griffiths, and being clever with her needle, she made all her own, and her children's clothes, and had acquired a reputation in beautiful, quiet Aberdovey, for being "a dressy little woman" far above the majority of her neighbours. Griffith was always proud of his wife, and anxious to please her, but just now unfortunately she had "set her heart" upon buying some expensive plush to make up into frocks for her two little girls, and when he remonstrated, saying it was beyond their means, she lost her temper.

It was evening, and the sun was setting in brilliant colours over the sea. One or two neighbours stood at their doors bargaining with a pedlar who was hawking round a quantity of dress materials, as pedlars do sometimes in lonely country places. It was in the pedlar's pack that Mary had seen the plush she so much coveted.

"He's going now," she said, despondently, as she saw him strapping up his pack preparatory to departure.

"Let him go," said her husband, "I am sure——"

"I am sure of this," she cried, quickly and passionately; "you're growing meaner, and more disagreeable every day, and I wish, I wish——" and she broke down, and began to cry.

"Here, take the money," said her husband, thrusting some silver into her hands, and walking out of the house, and down towards the beach.

Mary dried her tears, and ran after the pedlar to buy the plush, with which she returned in triumph.

The sunset had by this time faded away, and a dull greyness had stolen over everything out of doors. The children were in bed, and as Griffith did not come back, the cottage seemed very dull and lonely. Mary stood in the doorway watching for her husband, and already feeling grieved that she had said those hasty, passionate words. After all, she did not care so much for the plush now she had got it; and, at any rate, it was not worth quarrelling about.

Just as the twilight was deepening into the darkness of night, a boy came up to tell her that her husband was going out fishing with his mate

Poor Mary! Her husband had never left her before without a tender leave-taking, and she knew it was her own fault that he did so now; but that knowledge did not make it any easier to bear.

There was nothing for it but to go home and go to bed; but she could not sleep for hours. She could not help thinking how her dead mother used to say to her long years before, "Mary, Mary, if you don't learn to govern your temper and restrain your tongue you'll bring sorrow upon yourself some day." And then again, "Mary, my child, when you feel tempted to covet anything, pray about it, and then you will find either that it becomes quite right for you to have what you want, or that you have grace given you to resist the wish and be content without it." "Dear mother," thought Mary, "I wish I were more like her." And then, by-and-by, she fell asleep.

"Mrs. Griffiths," called a pleasant voice the next day, and Mary hurried out to find the doctor's carriage stopping at her door.

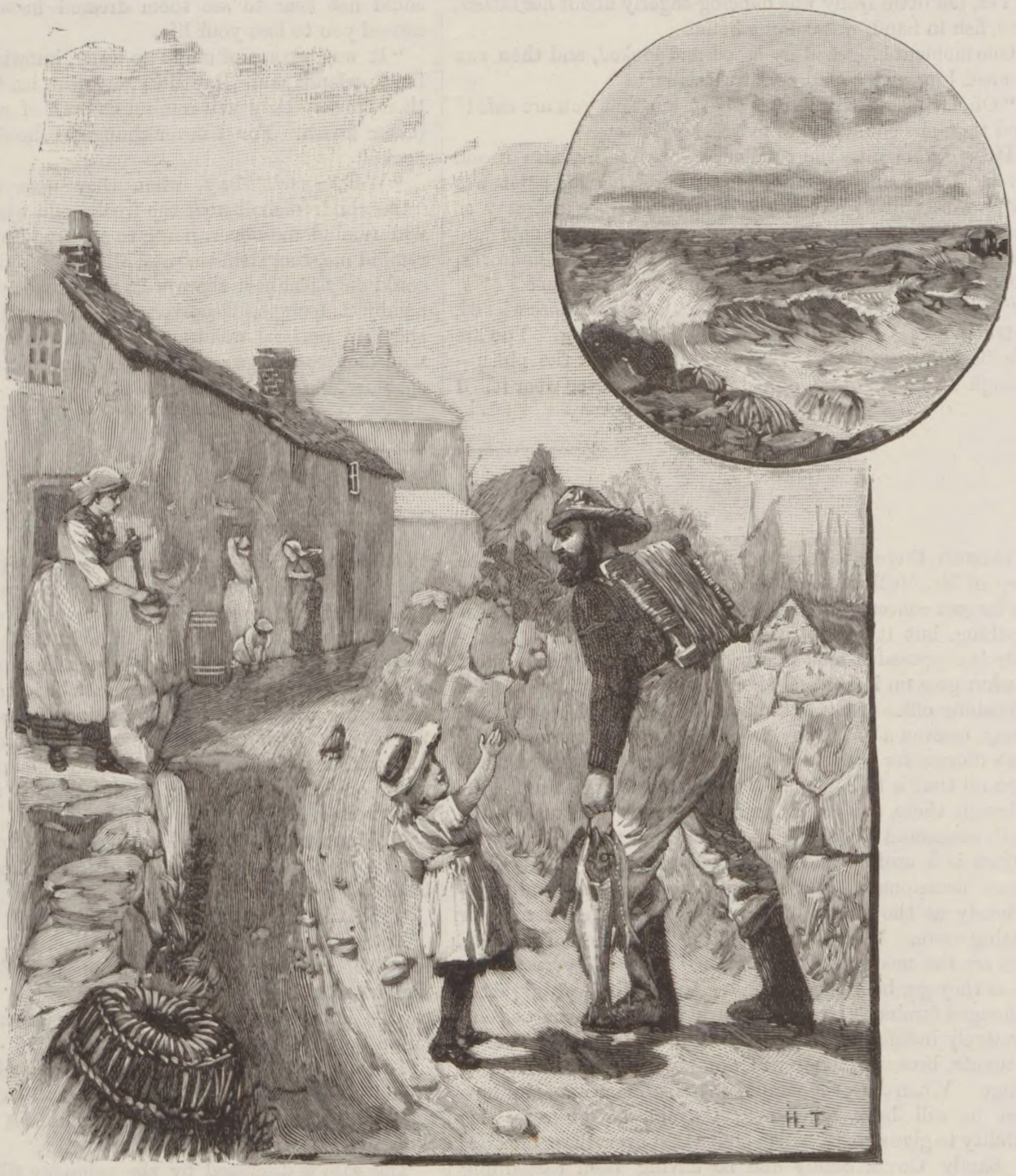
"I want to say a word to you about your husband," Dr. Rowlands went on, as she stood beside him. "He came to consult me yesterday, as you doubtless know, and I found his heart is a little amiss. Yes, yes, I know he looks strong, still he must be careful to avoid violent exertion. I have advised him not to go with the boats any more. He is a clever man; there are many other things he can do. And for him to risk being out in a storm is a sheer tempting of Providence. Good-day."

The busy doctor drove on, leaving Mary a very unhappy woman indeed. If she had only known all this before! If she had only listened when her husband wanted to explain why he could not let her have so much money! She knew it had long been his ambition to keep a shop and sell all sorts of fishing-tackle to the gentlemen who came there to fish, and she felt sure after his visit to the doctor he must have been feeling he now needed every penny to put to the fund he had been saving for the purpose. Perhaps he had been on the point of telling her about his visit to the doctor when she had interrupted him by her vehement request for the money. And he was ill; in spite of his usually healthy look, he had something the matter with his heart. He ought not to have gone out with the boat; it was very wrong of him. No doubt he wanted to earn money to make up for her extravagance about the children's frocks; but she was afraid he had been a little reckless, too, in his grief about her words.

Mary was miserable, and the day seemed as if it would never come to an end.

"God bless dear father, and bring him safe home aden," lisped the little ones at her knee, and Mary bent her head and prayed as she had never prayed before.

That night the wind rose high, and Mary stayed awake



"Her little Dolly was dancing eagerly about her father, who, fish in hand, was coming home."

shuddering at every fresh gust of wind, and often rising to look out, although it was impossible to perceive anything at all through the darkness. Earnestly did she pray that her wrong-doing might be forgiven, and that in future she might be able to refrain from speaking unadvisedly with her lips; and mingled with these prayers were many pleadings that her husband might be spared to her. Slowly the morning dawned at last, and the wind went down. Mary hurried out to find that nothing could be seen or heard of her husband's boat.

So she had to go home again and wait and hope and pray, and then get through another sleepless night as best she could.

"Father 'll come home to-day," said little Dolly, confidently, the next morning, and it really did seem as if she might be right. The day was so clear and calm and untroubled, Mary's heart felt lighter as she moved briskly about her household duties.

"If it please God to give me my dear husband again, I'll be a different woman," she said to herself. "I will not want to have my own way, I'll pray more, and I'll be careful to speak no hasty words."

"Mother," screamed little Dolly, who was outside, "father's coming," and Mary ran to the door, but at first she could see nothing for her tears.

"It's Griffith Griffiths! well I'm sure!" exclaimed a neighbour, who was draining the water off her potatoes just outside her door.

Mary dashed away her tears, and looked wistfully down the village street.

Yes, her little Dolly was dancing eagerly about her father, who, fish in hand, was coming home.

One moment longer Mary stood and looked, and then ran to meet him with a glad cry of welcome.

"Oh, Griffith, Griffith, how glad I am that you are safe!" And then she could say no more.

He drew her into the cottage, and threw his arm round her. "I've been out for the last time," he said; "it was rough work; and I'll obey the doctor in future and stay at home. We'll start a shop, Mary, and I can make nets and many other things. And the children shall have their frocks, and you'll not think I'm very mean, dear—will you?"

"Oh!" she cried, interrupting him, "forgive those wicked, untrue words. I did not know what I was saying. You are the best husband in the world—and as for the plush—though I've bought it, our children shall never wear it. I could not bear to see them dressed in what might have caused you to lose your life.

"It was wrong of me to go away, knowing as I did what Dr. Rowlands said. But Mary, my dear, let the children have their frocks—they will remind us both of what has been a bitter lesson. For I never thought I should see my home again."

"Well," said Mary, when they were a little calmer, "the children shall wear the frocks, and when I see them it will remind me never, never to say hasty words, and it will remind me, too, Griffith," and Mary lowered her voice till he could only just hear the words, "to make every special want a subject for special prayer. Mother used to advise that; she said nothing was too homely to be mentioned to Him who clothes the grass of the field, and without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground."

THE SHOP OF OUR VILLAGE.

ALTHOUGH there are several "shopies" in our village, the shop of Mr. McMaunken has no rival. It is not only by far the largest concern, and one where you may purchase almost anything, but it is also a social institution, where everybody is supposed to look in, who takes an intelligent interest in what goes on in the neighbourhood. McMaunken's is the publishing office of the local news. You don't have to pay a penny, or even a halfpenny, in order to get posted up in the day's doings, for here, without presses and printers, you will learn all that is taking place. Indeed, sometimes more, for although there are no printers, there are generally some devils connected with the dissemination of verbal news.

Ours is a crofter and fishing village, where money only comes occasionally, and disappears as rapidly and mysteriously as the shoals of herrings on which we rely for getting more. When herrings fail us, and therefore money, eggs are the medium of circulation. They are very well as far as they go, but they are not adapted for warding off a prolonged famine. However, much practice leaves us comparatively indifferent to little acts of self-denial. This is fortunate, because money will not always buy beef in our village. When one of McMaunken's customers asks him how soon he will have butcher-meat again, he professes his inability to give a reply, and explains that everything depends on Sandy Gunn, Sandy and he having been bargaining about a cow, which, if he could only secure for ten shillings less, would leave him with plenty of meat to-morrow. In the event of Sandy holding out, it might be a month before there would be any.

The crowd around McMaunken's counter in the evening would lead a stranger to imagine that he was making his fortune, instead of only selling odd ounces of tobacco, the profit on which would scarcely pay for the light burnt. But although he is as mercenary as most men, it is as a newsmonger that he takes his pleasure. Seeing an old woman at the door, a noted gossip, his eyes twinkle in anticipation, as he motions to the company that they may clear away so that she can advance. She then comes forward, wishes him good evening in a low, modest voice, and takes a basket from her arm, which she lays on the counter. The talk ceases for a moment, perhaps because the old woman turns round and has a good look to see who are present, while McMaunken proceeds with the counting of the eggs contained in the basket. This done, he mentions how many there are, and then she orders the tea, sugar, and other articles for which they are to be bartered. Presently she grows uneasy, and after satisfying herself that she can relieve her mind unheard by the loafers, begins an animated whisper, which, judging from the shopkeeper's expression, indicates that the person or persons to whom it relates have very good reason for feeling ashamed of their conduct. Having transacted the business with irritating slowness, the old woman at last, in the best of humour with herself and all mankind seemingly, turns on her heel, and in a tone that is far too amiable, wishes them all a very good night.

McMaunken, after watching her out at the door, paces up and down behind the counter with his face buried in his beard, and his beard in his breast.

"What is it?" asks somebody.

There is no answer for some time, but eventually the shopkeeper is prevailed upon to speak. Tommy Mackray, and he would never believe such a thing of Tommy, was carried home last night—hadn't a leg under him. Perhaps it was only the badness of the whiskey.

Tommy has been teetotal this long time, reports a friend of his, whereupon another remarks that that would account for his making a beast of himself if he once tasted whiskey.

The case is discussed by the company till a later edition brings the information that Tommy was not so very far gone, but he fell and sprained his ankle. A still later announces that he was "mortal," and on hearing of the fall, hints that it was a lucky intervention of Providence, for, considering his condition, had he been able to get up a second time, he would have been likely to receive something infinitely worse than an injured ankle. By-and-by a man comes with special news to the effect that he was with Tommy last night when he fell on a slippery stone, and if whiskey had anything to do with the affair it must have been what he last took six years ago!

Verbal news is particularly liable to evolutionary freaks, and our village is no exception to the rule, although there is no place where deliberate malice would be regarded with more detestation. Only in very rare instances do we blacken a neighbour's character out of mere pleasure; we understand the ever-varying complexion of rumour, and bear with each other's widely different versions of the same story in a manner at once accommodating and beautiful to behold. When

two versions of a story conflict, they are blended and formed into a third. Should you cast doubt on one of McMaunken's narratives, he will allow you a liberal discount —much more readily than from a bill—for the probable "addeeshions" it may have acquired in the course of its transmissions.

Owing to the many departments represented in Mac's business, he is unable to keep much of a stock in each, with the result that his customers can rarely get the very thing they want, and have therefore to content themselves with something approaching their requirements. Sometimes a labourer is put off with a pair of fine elastic-sided boots, while hob-nailed ones are at another time offered to a dandy. If a lady wants cinnamon she may be told there is none, but there is ginger if that will do. In a dearth of sugar, treacle has been recommended as an excellent substitute, and, as the nearest approach in stock, castor-oil instead of a fly-blister. Possibly our village merchant is colour blind, for in selling dress materials he has been known to call blue black, and red green, according to the colour required. He might submit to correction in such cases of glaring error if the person with whom he was dealing seemed firm, but in shades of colour it would be utter folly to attempt moving him from his original statement.

When vans from the nearest town first took to visiting our village with goods, Mr. McMaunken predicted serious things for their owners, and far worse things for those who patronized them. It wasn't that he objected to competition; he only grieved because the vans would accustom people to cheap rubbish. However, on finding that distressing his mind for the public good was a poorly appreciated service, as the custom obtained by the vans plainly indicated, he then tried holding his tongue and lowering his prices. This restored the most of his wandering customers to him, and now, although he takes as much interest as ever in other people's affairs, there is one subject that must never be mentioned in his hearing—vans.

McMaunken may have his weaknesses like the rest of us, but for a self-made man he makes less of his virtues than many a person would in the same circumstances. He has stuck by his shop, which has enabled him to push several deserving young fellows to the front who would otherwise be doomed to life-long poverty. Having provided them with outfits, and in some cases with cash, he has sent them all over the world, and while he delights to speak of those who have proved worthy, he simply ignores a few ungrateful wretches in whom his confidence has been misplaced.

J. Sutherland.

TO MY LITTLE ONE IN HEAVEN.

Brief was thy stay, my snow-white dove!
A few short hours of tender joy;
Yet what a world of rapturous love
Was born with thee, my baby boy!
A brighter glory tinged the sky
When first thy mother gazed on thee,
For oh! thy little wailing cry
To her was sweetest melody!

Though very poor in worldly goods,
My darling, I was wholly blest
With thy sweet lips, two soft spring buds,
Unfolding on my loving breast!
Thou wert a treasure all mine own,
Of life and light the dearest part!
A part of mine thy soul had grown,
Thy beauteous presence filled my heart!

In trembling rapture, half divine,
I held thee in my close embrace,
And smiled to think those eyes of thine
Ere long should know thy mother's face!
The world to me grew wondrous bright
With a new beauty, strange and sweet!
As in my foolish, fond delight,
I kissed thy pretty, rosy feet!

My spirit, chained to earthly things,
Refused to fix its hopes on high,
And could not hear the rustling wings
Of purer spirits hovering nigh!
Vain were thy mother's hopes and fears,
For ere the morn dawned, cold and gray,
Too lovely for this vale of tears,
Thy guileless soul had soared away!

I know thy Heavenly Father's hand
Hath led thee through the golden gate,
To join the fair celestial band,
While I outside in sorrow wait!
But when I leave this scene of woe
For that bright sphere where all rejoice,
I'll call thy name—for ah, I know
My boy will hear his mother's voice!

Fanny Forrester.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

September is one of the pleasantest months in the year, and in a general way so warm as to make the shortening of the days very regrettable to most minds. Still, the long evenings, when one is no longer tempted to be out of doors, give the opportunity for needlework, and a great deal must be done if winter is not to take the family unawares and terribly unprepared. Good under garments add more to the comfort of life than smart frocks, and a new mode of making flannel petticoats has come out that will help materfamilias amazingly by enabling her to make two or even three old ones into one of considerably larger dimensions. The petticoat proper comes only just to the knees, or scarcely so low, and it may even be gored if necessary, and at all events must have very little fulness in it. The bottom must be turned

up with a strip of fine calico, or rather wide flannel binding, to give strength and firmness, and all the lower part of the petticoat must be put on as a deep flounce, neatly gathered and sewn to the edge of the upper part. This gives additional warmth, but allows free play for the limbs, and, by allowing the fulness to spring from just above the knees, preserves them from the rheumatism which often seizes that vulnerable part and settles there. A very safe and capital way of making an under-skirt that is a light and welcome addition to the clothing before it is necessary to take to winter garments altogether, is to pick an old silk or alpaca skirt to pieces, and, after cleaning or brushing it, to make up into a gored petticoat, and line it with any old coloured flannels available. Each gore or width must be laid flat on a table, face downward, the flannel must be laid on, and tacked all round, and then the width can be machined together, beginning all the seams at the top. A hem and braid will give all the additional weight wanted at the bottom, and it is a kind of petticoat that feels delightful under either a thin or a thick dress. These are the economies that give real comfort, and yet allow for putting the best foot foremost, and having the winter frocks and jackets good enough to last instead of being obliged to buy the shoddy things that speedily get so shabby, and wear out so fast that new ones are needed long before they ought to be afforded.

There is a new way of making sleeves, which, combined with the fashion of using two kinds of materials, and even having the sleeve a different colour from the dress, ought to be a help to the economical. The first thing, of course, is to cut the lining, and for an amateur there is a very nice

kind of sleeve cut all in one piece, but having on the outside of the arm a seam just from wrist to elbow. Supposing that you have two materials, say two remnants or two old frocks to be made into one new one; first of all make a puff at the top of the sleeve and another at the elbows. Between these two lay a straight piece of the second material, and stitch it by each edge right across the sleeve with the sewing machine, and also lay straight pieces for the lower part of the sleeve. Then machine your short and your long under-arm seam, and everything will be done firm, strong, and in its proper place, and just where the elbows often poke through a tight sleeve you will have a puff.

Very nice thin cloth cloaks, equally suitable for old and young, are made with a small shoulder-piece and four widths of cloth put together, hemmed at the bottom, gathered with a heading at the top, and stitched firmly on to the shoulder-piece. The cloak thus may be said to shape itself, and it forms a most useful cover-all over a thin dress in spring or autumn. Such nice materials are water-proofed now that something of that kind can be chosen, and the cloak will thus serve a double purpose. The kind of water-proof fabric called F. F. O., or Free from Odour, is made in almost endless variety of check, tweed, stripe, etc.

Small flounces are much worn at the bottom of dresses of plain material that is not too heavy, and they go in twos and threes, as well as singly. They counter-balance the effect of a figure that is large about the hips, and are thus very becoming to people who a short time ago looked like exaggerated peg-tops. Pockets are put much nearer the front of the dress than formerly, and are thus much more under the wearer's control. It was very humiliating to have to ask some one else to find your pocket; and, moreover, when placed so far back they were quite temptations to thieves.

Little children's frocks are being very much made in pinafore form, and two materials can very well be used for them. The yoke, sleeves, and about an eighth of a yard round the bottom of the skirt are of one, and all the rest of the frock of the other. Some care is required in making, but the end quite requites the pains.

The little girl in the yoke cloak wears a very neat garment, and the yoke is of checked cloth while the remainder is plain, because this plan enables two remnants to be utilised. The cape shown in the other figure has a velvet centre and silk frill, and is very useful for protecting the chest and back, even when no additional warmth is needed.

The pattern of the little cloak may be had by enclosing 9½d. to M. L., at the office of the MOTHERS' COMPANION, and that of the cape for 6½d.